



The Old Ironsides Report



10 July 2003

Hot dogs & straight talk -- top general meets 82nd

Story by Sgt. Brent M. Williams, 49th Public Affairs Detachment (Airborne)

BAGHDAD, Iraq—The Chief of Staff of the Army, Gen. John M. Keane, met with paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division's 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom July 5.

The Army's highest ranking general visited the 2nd Brigade headquarters, a truck dealership in South Baghdad, where a group of paratroopers from Task Force Falcon were given the opportunity to have a hamburger and a hot dog with the four-star general.

"You guys want to talk about anything ask me, I'll do my best to answer your questions," Keane said, only slightly interested in the burger on his plate.

Reluctant at first, the paratroopers eventually opened to the general's invitation, first answering his questions about the quality of life in Iraq and then asking the question on every deployed soldier's mind.

"I'll tell you the truth," Keane said, when asked about redeployment. "I don't know."

"One thing we can't do," he said, "we can't walk away from all that we have achieved here and lose this thing in the end. We have to see it through to the end. We have to stay the course to make sure it is right . . . You guys are Army soldiers and you have to keep your heads in the game."

The answer was enough to break the ice, and once the soldiers realized that they could talk to the Army Chief of Staff, a roundtable of questions began.

In between bites of hot dogs and beans, the soldiers addressed the issues most relevant to them: logistics, chow, mail, morale, and other soldiers' issues.

The majority of the soldier's questions were answered, directly, often gruffly.

The soldiers were receptive to Keane's candor and engaged in active conversations with their distinguished guest.

Other topics brought to the table included possible missions in Liberia, the future of the paratrooper and airborne operations, multinational forces and the progress in Iraq.

"There's a tremendous accomplishment here, winning the war, throwing the regime out and



U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gen. John Keane eats lunch with soldiers from Task Force Falcon to discuss issues of concern, the COS also received a briefing on the brigade's achievements in Iraq so far, during a July 5th visit to Iraq.

still fighting the guys who are trying to remove us," Keane said. "There's something to be said for America's fighting forces."

Keane reminded the soldiers that the war is still being waged daily, as irregular enemy forces are working against coalition efforts.

"The enemy that is working against us is living in and amongst the people," Keane said. "The more we convince the people of Iraq that their freedom is really permanent and not temporary, the more they will support us. Over time they'll get to understand who we are, what we stand for and why we're here."

While Keane could not bring the soldiers home, he did bring words of comfort from the American people.

"They care so much about what you're doing in Iraq; they care so much about you," Keane said to the troops. "The amount of support you have from the American people is the highest I've seen in my 37 years."

"It was great talking to Chief of Staff," said Cpl. Arnold Bogarty, Company C, 3rd Battalion, 325th AIR.

"I was lucky to be the one chosen to represent my company here today, so I brought issues that my teammates asked me to address on their behalf. Not to mention, it's the biggest coin I've ever got."



NEWS

Expert: U.S. Knew al-Qaida Might Attack

WASHINGTON (AP) - The United States and the international community sat by for a decade as Afghanistan became "a terrorist Disneyland" where attackers were trained and assaults were planned, a terrorism expert testified Wednesday.

Rohan Gunaratna, head of terrorism research at the Institute for Defence and Strategic Studies in Singapore, told an independent terrorism investigative commission here that U.S. leaders had to know their homeland would eventually be targeted.

Bush Pledges Role in Liberia Crisis

PRETORIA, South Africa (AP) - President Bush pledged Wednesday that the United States will "be involved" in war-torn Liberia but said he would not overextend U.S. armed forces if he sends troops there to join a peacekeeping force.

On the second day of a five-country African tour, Bush did not commit himself to deploying troops to Liberia. Civil war has dragged on for years and conditions in Monrovia have become desperate amid a political stalemate involving President Charles Taylor.

Calif. Man Surrenders in Shooting Deaths

BAKERSFIELD, Calif. (AP) - An elementary school vice principal wanted for questioning in the shooting deaths of his estranged wife, mother-in-law and three young children surrendered to police early Wednesday in North Carolina.

The FBI and law enforcement agencies across the country had been asked to help search for Vincent Brothers, 41, after police discovered the bodies Tuesday in a Bakersfield home.

Chaplain's thought for the day:

The Awesome Power of God

Back and forth go the pounding waves of the sea. From ages past, the continents have been separated by the mighty oceans. We have learned to travel over them, to descend to the bottom of them, and to travel through them but their immensity and the relentless force of their waves remain untamable.

Rocks are crushed, shorelines are changed, and even experienced sailors can be driven aground or sent to the bottom of the sea. Our combined genius and powerful equipment can do little to conquer the oceans.

When the turbulent seas of adversity are threatening, we need to remember the awesome power of God.

"Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord" (Psalm 114:7).

SPORTS

Armstrong's Team Wins Tour Time Trial

SAINT-DIZIER, France (AP) - Lance Armstrong's team won a time trial Wednesday, putting him in good position for another Tour de France title as he approaches the Alps.

Armstrong's teammate, Victor Hugo Pena, claimed the yellow jersey as overall leader. He is the first Colombian to wear the jersey in the Tour's 100-year history.

Apparent suicide

ISTANBUL, Turkey (AP) -- New York Rangers forward Roman Lyashenko wrote a suicide note, then apparently tried to cut his wrists before hanging himself, a Turkish police officer said.

Lyashenko's body was found hanging Sunday by a belt in the bathroom at a beach resort in Antalya, a southern Mediterranean province. He had been vacationing with his mother and sister.

In the note, Lyashenko apologized for killing himself, according to a paramilitary police officer. The prosecutor's office refused to comment Wednesday, saying the investigation was ongoing.

And in other news...

'Osbournes' to Return for Third Season

LOS ANGELES (AP) - Get ready for a third season of family dysfunction, messy pets and four-letter words. "The Osbournes" will return for 20 new episodes on MTV early next year, the network announced.

Filming at the family's Beverly Hills mansion will resume this fall. "It's been one hell of a journey these past few years," patriarch Ozzy Osbourne said. "This whole MTV thing has been an incredible adventure. We didn't want the adventure to end so soon."

Clinton's Book Sales Top 1 Million

WASHINGTON (AP) - Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton has sold more than 1 million copies of her memoir "Living History," in almost exactly a month, her publisher announced Wednesday.

"What has been particularly exciting is the speed with which it has achieved such unprecedented sales levels," Simon & Schuster executive Carolyn Reidy said in a statement.

TODAY'S WEATHER

High: 111F /44C

Low: 82F/28C

